[4th March 1958

Legislative Assembly Hall at Government House Estate, Mount Road

* 38 *Q.*—SRI MOHAMED RAZA KHAN : Will the Hon. the Minister for Finance be pleased to state—

(*a*) the estimated amount of expenditure to be incurred by the Government in converting the Legislative Assembly Hall at Government House Estate, Mount Road, Madras, into a Children's Theatre ; and

(*b*) whether there is any proposal before the Government to use this Hall for conducting public meetings also?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN (on behalf of the Hon. the Minister for Finance) : (*a*) The question is still under consideration of the Government. An estimate of Rs. 1 lakh for making alterations and improvements to the Legislative Assembly Hall in the Government House Estate, Mount Road, Madras, for use as a Children's Theatre, as well as for the furnishings, has been recently received from the Chief Engineer, Public Works Department and is under examination.

(*b*) No.

SRI T. PURUSHOTHAM : Will the Government allow the Hall for holding public functions or music performances on payment of rent when the Hall is free and not required for children's shows?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN : Certain alterations have got to be made in this Hall if it is to be treated as the Children's Theatre and until final decisions are taken in this behalf, we do not want to create any precedent by giving it on hire to someone or another.

SRI T. P. SRINIVASAVARADAN : Is it not the intention to have it only as the Children's Theatre? Very recently, if I remember aright, when the inauguration took place, a performance also was held for the children. Has it not been decided to have it only as the Children's Theatre?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN : Yes, it has been decided to have it as the Children's Theatre. But the further question whether it could be used as a meeting hall is still undecided.

SRI MOHAMED RAZA KHAN : Will it not be more advisable for the Government to keep the Hall always closed so that posterity may always say that once upon a time the Legislative Assembly met there and that a sum of Rs. 10 lakhs was spent on its construction? Will it not be more advisable to keep it as a relic at least? (Laughter.)

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN : Well, it all depends on how one looks at it. If the hon. Member thinks that by closing it, posterity will remember it, I differ from him. Perhaps, people will remember it more if it is put to some use.

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DR. V. K. JOHN : Will there be these film shows everyday? Will they not ruin the children?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN : We do not want to ruin the children.

SRI MOHAMED RAZA KHAN : If I remember aright, the Prime Minister who inaugurated it said, 'I am happy that it is being put to better use.' Does keeping the Hall closed for six months in a year mean its being put to better use?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN : It will be put to better use if it is used as a Children's Theatre, and it is expected that there will be one or two shows every month. It would not be kept closed for six months in a year as the hon. Member suggests.

Decentralization of work in Government Press

* 39 *Q.*—SRI T. PURUSHOTHAM : Will the Hon. the Minister for Electricity be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether there is any proposal before the Government for decentralization of the work in Madras Government Press and for the location of a Branch Press in each district; and

(*b*) if so, the stage at which the matter now stands?

THE HON. SRI V. RAMAIAH : (*a*) No.
(*b*) Does not arise.

SRI T. PURUSHOTHAM : Will the Government consider the proposal to have District Presses at least in big places like Madurai, Tiruchirappalli, Coimbatore, etc. as the work in the Press in the Mint buildings is very heavy and also the starting of District Presses would provide work for some in those centres?

THE HON. SRI V. RAMAIAH : I shall examine the suggestion.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Questions are over.

[*Note.*—An asterisk (*) at the commencement of a speech indicates revision by the Member.]

II.—ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE HON. CHAIRMAN *RE* DECISION OF THE BUSINESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

MR. CHAIRMAN : At a meeting of the Business Advisory Committee held at 2–30 p.m. to-day, the following programme of business has been decided upon :—

Tuesday, 4th March 1958 ..	General discussion on the Budget for the year 1958–59.
Wednesday, 5th March 1958 ..	
Thursday, 6th March 1958 ..	
Friday, 7th March 1958 ..	